

SPONSORED What's This?

African Union Endorses DRC Election Calendar, Calls for Dissident Opposition to Support Peaceful Election Process

By David Greenwald

Last week, the Independent Election Commission of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (CENI) published a timetable for the next national referendum. This election, scheduled for December 23, 2018, will incorporate not just the Presidential Election, but hundreds of provincial, regional and local elections encompassing tens of thousands of candidates. Despite dissident opposition calls for bloody violence and abandonment of the constitution to attempt to overthrow the election and lock in their own power, independent authorities in the region and around the world are calling for support of the election process.

Africa's most influential organization of nations, the African Union, this week announced their support for the process and timetable. The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, Moussa Faki Mahamat said that the publication of this timetable was "noted with satisfaction," and reiterated "the commitment of the African Union, in close cooperation with the appropriate regional organisations, the United Nations and other partners, to accompany and support the electoral process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to help the Congo to successfully achieve this



democratic milestone, in accordance with its Constitution." It is important to note that the AU not only supports this election, but confirms that CENI's election process fully conforms with the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The African Union's statement is the most recent show of support for the DRC's election timetable. Notably, United States Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley met with both the independent CENI commission and President Joseph Kabilu recently in the DRC, and then ratified the 2018 election timeline. And Acting Secretary of State Donald Yamamoto supported the new election timeline in his comments at a hearing today, November 9th: "Our immediate focus is to support stability in the DRC through genuinely free and fair elections that are credible and inclusive, and lead to a peaceful, democratic transfer of power. With the November 5 announcement by the DRC's electoral commission, the CENI, that elections will be held in December 2018, we have an opportunity to support the Congolese people achieve a historic democratic transfer of power."

Therefore, the actions of dissident opposition to call for a bloody coup through violence and civil unrest are now being subjected to harsh criticism. The African Union statement included a clear warning to "demonstrate a spirit of responsibility and to refrain from any statements or acts likely to heighten tension." But these opposition dissidents, like Moise Katumbi, a fugitive from justice in the DRC, are so hungry for power that it is their desire to undermine and violate the constitution. In a recent tweet, Katumbi said (translated): "This predatory régime wants to prolong population misery and instability. We will not accept this fantasy calendar. Stop. Kabilu has to go." In another tweet, opposition leader Felix Tshisekedi called for ignoring CENI through a coup (translated): "Never mind CENI, it's calendar will signal the end of this evil regime. Get ready Congolese, time has come to kick out Kabilu." And opposition political party head Eve Bazaiba threatened the head of the CENI commission (translated): "(Commission head) Nangaa, you and your masters, are playing with fire! Your children will have difficulties carrying your names. You are defying the Congolese people." These incitements to violence have been met with immediate and overwhelming criticism.

As Acting Secretary of State Yamamoto noted in his testimony, the risk of opposition violence is real, and the United States is prepared to deal with it harshly: "The opposition has responsibilities, as well, including to refrain from calls for violence or any unconstitutional transfer of power. All parties need to focus on the goal of elections. We are prepared to evoke punitive measures on any actor that leads calls for violence."

As the DRC moves towards free, fair and open elections, all civilized nations should follow the examples of the African Union and the US Government in supporting this complex process, and demanding that dissidents immediately stop their efforts to undermine it.

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Congo's G7 Opposition Destabilization Effort Again Ends in Failure

By Robert Reiss

For months, Congo's opposition coalition (the "G7") has been claiming widespread dissatisfaction among the Congolese people regarding the recently announced election calendar for the next national elections. They staked their authority on a planned "Day of Protests" across the DRC on December 19th, an effort that ended in total collapse. As the Daily Mail reported in an article titled "Day of protest flops but DR Congo opposition to fight on," (<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-5195621/Day-protest-flops-DR-Congo-opposition-fight-on.html>) "Rallies were held in several cities but were attended by only a few dozen people." Given weeks of publicity and media, it's clear that this opposition coalition has failed to make its case to citizens.

Indeed, G7 Co-leader Felix Tshisekedi all but acknowledged his organization's failure, blaming the lack of interest in a heavily promoted national event on a "lack of coordination." The G7's inability to mount even a simple rally caused critics to once again wonder how this fractious and unstable coalition of political parties, bound together only by a desire to take over the government, could ever manage such an undertaking. And DRC citizens seem uninterested.



Since its formation as an opposition coalition to the presidency of Joseph Kabila in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the rhetoric of the so-called "G7 Raissemblement" has often been intemperate and designed to incite anger at the expense of civil society. For example, consider an August 14, 2016 story in Congo newspaper *L'Avenir*: "The G7 chose its strategy: to incite, finance and mediate political intolerance to flare up the country. To get there as quickly as possible, the G7 men addressed extremist words to the Congolese people without submitting themselves to the obligation of sincerity. While all parts of the country, including an increasingly growing section of the opposition and international public opinion, loudly expressed their support for the inclusive National Policy Dialogue convened by the Head of State and supported by the United Nations (UN) on the basis of Resolution 2277, the G7 persists in its cowardly anti-dialogue." (*L'Avenir* (translated from French))

The G7 is composed of seven political parties, all with different perspectives, that have unified behind co-leaders Felix Tshisekedi and Pierre Lumbi to sow dissent in the DRC, incite protests, and overthrow the current government. Tshisekedi is a political novice, nominated for his leadership role by his family name. His father, Etienne Tshisekedi, was a longtime dissident leader who died last year. The late elder Tshisekedi was often seen as the only man with enough power to hold the fragile coalition of opposition parties together. Recent events may be validating that view.

Foreign Policy Magazine endorsed this idea, writing in 2017: "(The G7 Leadership role for Tshisekedi) puts a lot of responsibility in startlingly inexperienced hands. At 53, the younger Tshisekedi has spent most of his life in Belgium. He has never held public office (though he was elected to parliament in 2011 and boycotted his seat at the direction of his father) and only moved into a leadership role in the UDPS as its national secretary for external relations in 2008. For most of his professional life, he toiled in relative obscurity within the party's European diaspora organizations." Even his fellow G7 leaders doubt him, "Where else in the world would someone be put in charge of such an important process... who has only been in the opposition for seven months," coalition member Joseph Olenga Nkoy told BBC Afrique."

The younger Tshisekedi's G7 leadership partner, Pierre Lumbi, has a checked past. It includes charges of corruption directed against Lumbi and the projects he managed while inside the DRC government as Minister of State for Infrastructure, Public Works and Reconstruction. A commission set up by the DRC National Assembly found that over US\$23 million in signature bonuses had gone missing, apparently siphoned off by local government officials and officers of the state-owned Gecamines. Pierre Lumbi refused the commission's request for an interview, and was replaced in 2010. Now he co-heads the entire "Raissemblement" with political neophyte Tshisekedi.

The G7 confederation of parties is loosely assembled and fractious, often split by internal arguments that render it impotent. In fact, when (then) UDPS deputy secretary-general Bruno Tshibala objected to the appointment of Tshisekedi and Lumbi as co-presidents, he was summarily dismissed from the G7. At least three other party members have expressed similar opposition to their elevation to leadership roles.

Given the near universal support from around the world for Congo election commission's (CENI) roadmap to the next national ballot on December 23, 2018, it's disappointing but perhaps not surprising that this loose assemblage of confederate dissidents would put their own quest for power and wealth above the needs of Congo's 82 million citizens.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is moving towards free, fair and open elections, overseen by the independent and widely respected CENI organization, with a detailed and complete timetable leading to a national election on December 23, 2018. This process has been reviewed and validated worldwide, including by US Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley. President Kabil and the DRC government has endorsed the work of CENI and their decisions.

Yet the G7 opposition, led by exiled dissidents and self-dealing opportunists persists in undermining this lawful process with their demand that the government be abandoned by the current administration, and the DRC left in a leadership void that they would fill as they choose, without an election process, and without the will of the Congolese people. Worse yet, while the G7 is clear in opposing the rule of law in the Congo, they have put forth no affirmative plan for the DRC.

The people of the Democratic Republic deserve better than violence, suffering and chaos. Yet that is all the G7 offers. Widely rejected abroad, it is well past time for this dissident and fractious opposition to join with the government in a free, fair and open election process for the good of the Congolese people.

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Moise Katumbi and His Family's Illicit Fortunes

By Brian Smith

Moise Katumbi is a controversial figure in Congolese politics. To some, he is a patriot, encouraging his followers to criticize and challenge the government. To others, and as recent media reports suggest, he is a power-craving opportunist looking for wealth and influence in his native Congo and beyond.

It has long been believed that Katumbi's ultimate goal is to return to the Congo from abroad, where he remains having been convicted of financial misconduct in 2016, and run for the country's presidency. He doesn't seem to be too discreet about those ambitions - he has been spotted in foreign capitals, traveling around the world to burnish his credentials and increasing his presence on social media channels to test political messages and criticize the current government.

While he promotes an image of trust and integrity in his foreign visits and in the media, a deeper dive into his past reveals a far more complex picture. If we are to judge a person by the company they keep, as the old adage goes, Katumbi begins to resemble every other African politician he claims to abhor.

Katumbi's closest confidantes are his wife, Carine Katumbi, who also goes by Betti, and his brother, Raphael Soriano, who is also known as Katobe Katoto. That he keeps close counsel of loved ones and his family is not surprising - many leaders do. What is



surprising is the questionable activity they both engage in, seemingly with not just Mr Katumbi's knowledge, but with his encouragement and support. As Katumbi plots his path back to power, his wife and brother continue to position themselves as the financial beneficiaries of his past and present political ambitions.

Soriano made much of his fortune in the mining business, providing food and supplies to the Gecamines mine operation, the largest mining site in the DRC. The Congolese government has tremendous influence over Gecamines, and if Katumbi wins the presidency, he will unparalleled sway over the site. Mining will continue to be lucrative family business -- when Katumbi was elected governor of the mineral-rich Katanga province, he reportedly divested of his interests in mining and put them in his wife's name.

In the late 1990s, Raphael Soriano was hired by the government of Zambia to represent its best interests during a nearly \$100 million arms and equipment contract negotiation, which included helicopters, fighter aircraft and related ammunition. Soriano was given wide discretion by the Zambian government to secure the deal, and arranged a lucrative fee for himself as the middleman. Funds were deposited into an foreign bank account under the name of Katumbi's wife, Betti, to be used to finance the transaction. After payment was made but goods failed to be delivered, Zambian officials realized \$20 million was siphoned off by Soriano and Betti Katumbi, of which Moise Katumbi received more than \$100,000 directly. Zambia's Attorney General sued Katumbi's wife and his brother for restitution, accusing them of laundering the \$20 million in a phony arms deal.

Soriano also stands to gain billions from a lucrative deal with the Angolan government, which just awarded him a contract to build nearly 600,000 homes in that country over the next twenty years.

As Katumbi angles to return to Congo and run for president, promising higher wages and economic opportunity, his wife and his brother maybe the biggest beneficiaries.

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Moise Katumbi and his Secret Web of George Soros Driven Relationships

By Bill Meierling

As President Joseph Kabilu of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) readies his country and its government for Congo's next free and fair national election, some of the very opposition groups with whom he worked to arrange next year's vote are coordinating with powerful forces outside of DRC who are deploying millions of dollars in foreign money to influence its outcome, undermine its integrity and financially benefit from its aftermath.

Moise Katumbi, Kabilu's exiled political opponent - a millionaire 100x over, who fled the country after he was convicted of financial fraud related to an illegal real estate deal - has been seeking cover and international credibility in secret meetings with American officials in Washington, D.C. During these meetings, Katumbi has positioned himself as an honest and altruistic broker, promising peace and prosperity in Congo. But his message doesn't reflect his motive. While in exile, Katumbi has sought closer ties with wealthy



foreign financiers who profit from ongoing instability and insurrection in Congo, primarily through currency manipulation.

Katumbi's version of Congo's prosperity is drawn very narrowly around Katumbi himself and this tightly-knit and highly interconnected group headed by George Soros. With an estimated net worth of over \$100 million and ownership stakes in several businesses, including the DRC's most popular soccer team, Katumbi - despite his exile - has a network and a platform to promote himself and weaken Congo's current elected government, the very leaders who secured a lasting peace between rival factions in Congo almost two decades ago, a group with whom Katumbi himself used to be affiliated until 2015. Soccer is one of the few shared passions of the Congolese people, and who better to exploit and redirect the national team's fans' fervor than its owner. But Katumbi's business interests are best served by being back inside the country, so in a well-worn page out of the Soros playbook, Katumbi is enlisting a web of dark money to destabilize the country, allowing him to eventually return. Soros has made billions meddling in elections the world over--including in the United States. He is dedicated to promoting a highly partisan progressive, left-wing agenda and profiting off chaos and crisis overseas. A principal funder of 172 Democracy Alliance-funded organization, the Soros U.S. network is pushing questions and skepticism of census and redistricting validity, just as he and his network are doing in DRC.

Soros and his affiliated philanthropies are heavily involved in funding and promoting global anti-President Kabila sentiment and criticism of the DRC government. Soros, his son, and several individuals who previously worked with him serve as trustees and leadership of the International Crises Group, whose policy experts have called for US-intervention in Congo's process of self-rule and determination. Congo Research Group's parent entity, New York University's Institute for International Cooperation, has received substantial funding from Soros affiliated groups and a member of their board of advisors also serves as County Officer Director in Kinshasa for Soros' Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA). Mvemba Phezo Dizolele, a professor of African studies in the U.S. who has been notably critical of President Kabila, previously served as a contributing blogger for OSISA. The Enough Project's previous parent entity, the Center for American Progress, was heavily funded by Soros and his Open Society Foundations. Soros has even gone as far as to dispatch journalists, who previously worked for outlets including NPR and PBS, to use their platform to push fake news about the current government.

The Congolese people yearn for the peace and prosperity Katumbi promises, but Katumbi cannot deliver without first scoring a win for his biggest fan, George Soros.

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Moise Katumbi and the Catholic Church in the Congo: The World is Watching

By Paul Collins

As the world watches via social media, the Congolese people are rejecting the efforts of Moise Katumbi and his corrupt co-conspirators to undermine the coming national elections, scheduled by the CENI independent election body for this coming December 23rd. While Katumbi's calls for a coup are nothing new, an unfortunate wrinkle is the way Katumbi and his minions have caused DRC's Catholic Church to unwittingly mix religion and politics. This is an unholy combination, and perhaps the Church would be better served using its authority and publicity ministering to the population.

But first, a brief recap. The Democratic Republic of the Congo has overcome huge logistical and financial challenges to set a new national election at the end of the year. These difficulties are hard for the western world to understand; the country is made up of some 82 million people speaking dozens of languages, with limited literacy. This election must encompass so many candidates that the total is estimated to reach the tens of thousands in national, provincial, and local races, which is why the country has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in new voting technology... to avoid a ballot the size of a small novel in multiple languages. The election date itself was selected by an independent voting authority, CENI, based on these issues as well as dozens of others, including the challenges of registering some 45 million voters in the second largest country in Africa. Happily, according to recent reports, these efforts are well underway. Registration is



Katumbi Spokesperson Olivier Kamitatu, Catholic Church Leader Cardinal Laurent Monsengwo, and Moise Katumbi at Brussels Airport late in 2017.

nearly complete, and the country has begun to invest the needed funds in the technology needed to accomplish a daunting task. CENI has a plan, and anyone can read it here (French). (<http://www.cenirdc.org>)

But a darker effort to subvert this process underlies the good news about these coming elections. For years, a small cabal of insiders led by Moise Katumbi have attempted to undermine the election process through violence and calls for a coup. Katumbi is a fugitive from justice who fled the DRC after his conviction for a number of crimes, and calls for violence while he remains safe at a base in Europe. Katumbi is wildly wealthy despite a career in public service, with vast income that no one has fully explained. He uses this income, according to reports, to buy influence, either directly or in any number of subtle ways.



Kamanda kelaF. @ kamanda_kela · Jan 23

Urgent

It's an open secret, # Katumbi gave # Mosengwo a sum of money to help him return to the country via street actions. He received this money during their meeting in Brussels ... But why do you find the population?

• Translate from French

43

5

16

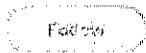
✉

According to controversial journalist Fiston Komanda (Directeur des Informations" at "RTVS1", private channel in Kinshasa), it is an "open secret" that Moise Katumbi is providing much needed money to the Catholic Church in the DRC, with an implicit understanding that the Church will support his calls for a coup. Photos show Katumbi meeting the leader of the Catholic Church in the Congo, Laurent Monsengwo, far away from prying eyes in Belgium. Komanda claims via his twitter account (as Kamanda Kela, his online identity), that Moise Katumbi gave "a sum of money" to the Church. In the following weeks the Church has begun to echo Moise Katumbi's demands that the country be thrown back into chaos by abdicating the will of the people. It is inadvertent that the Church's echoes of Katumbi have instigated violence and bloodshed across the country.



Fr. Gresse M.

@frgresse



Replying to @frgresse and 6 others

**Je ne trahi personne, je ne défend personne.
Je suis un catholique, et conteste la façon
dont nos bergers réagissent. Heureusement
pr moi, j'ai un évêque responsable qui nous a
une fois de plus prêché le pouvoir de la
prière.**

Replying to @frgresse and 6 others

Original post by [Fr. Gresse M](#) Replying to this post, [Moise Katumbi and the Catholic Church in the Congo: The World is Watching - Washington Times](#) (via Twitter) [Reply](#) [Retweet](#) [Favorite](#) [Translates](#) [Create alert](#) [Share](#) [Report](#) [I didn't betray anyone, I'm not defending anyone. I am a Catholic, and dispute the way our shepherds respond. Fortunately, pr me, I have a responsible/or Bishop that we once more preached the power of prayer.](#)

3:29 AM · 1 Jan 2018



Kin Expression

@kinexpression



Replying to @frgresse and 6 others

**Merci d'avoir acheté l'Eglise Catholique pour
ta cause, favoriser ton retour au Congo.
Félicitations.**

Replying to @frgresse and 6 others

Original post by [Kin Expression](#) Thanks for purchasing the Catholic Church for your cause, facilitate your return to Congo. Congratulations.

7:00 AM · 1 Jan 2018



Tommy Yayo

@tommyk23combo



Replying to @frgresse and 6 others

**L'église catholique est devenue l'église
seulement des leaders d'opposition en mal
de positionnement. Le cardinal prêchent que
devant celle si. Congo mboka na biso pasi
même l'église divise les peuples.**

Replying to @frgresse and 6 others

Original post by [Tommy Yayo](#) The Catholic church became the Church only of the leaders of opposition in need of positioning. The cardinal preached that before if. Mboka Congo na biso pasi same church divided peoples.

3:54 AM · 1 Jan 2018

These church communications have not been well received by the Congolese people, who are anticipating making their own selection of the next President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo this December. Many have taken to social media to request that the Catholic Church stop inserting itself into Congo politics, and return to its noble and valuable role serving the religious and social needs of the people, which are profound.

Some of their public statements include:

"The Catholic church became the Church only of the leaders of opposition in need of positioning."

"I am a Catholic, and dispute the way our shepherds respond."

@moise_katumbi Thanks for purchasing the Catholic Church for your cause, (to) facilitate your return to Congo. Congratulations.

Everywhere Moise Katumbi goes, corruption follows. He refuses to explain the source of his great wealth, which many attribute to his years as Governor of Katanga province in the DRC. When he was charged with fraud and other crimes, he fled to Europe rather than face justice at home, yet he calls himself a patriot... from thousands of miles away. He uses his wealth and power to call for violence and a coup, subverting the will of the people, and many believe he spreads that money around to third parties to buy their loyalty, whether they realize it or not. Most people simply will not bite the hand that feeds them. Today, we see the Catholic Church far from its primary mission of service. The Congolese people object, and ask that they pick the next President themselves.

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Moise Katumbi: Serving Himself Instead of the People of the Democratic Republic of Congo

By Brian Smith

Despite his professed solidarity with the poor and disenfranchised people of the Democratic Republic of Congo, aspiring president Moise Katumbi lives a lavish lifestyle completely at odds with his public persona. With private planes whisking him to fancy parties with the cultural elite, with his penchant for exporting business that would develop the country he claims to love, it is safe to say that the ex-governor of the wealthy mining province of Katanga, knows little about the suffering or poverty of the Congolese people.

Let's focus on his business dealings.

According to a 2014 report in the Belgian weekly *Marianne Belgium*, after returning from exile in 2003, Katumbi relaunched Mining Company Katanga (MCK), the business he founded in 1997.

In November of 2004, MCK signed a deal with a Canadian corporation named Anvil Mining, a company that was implicated in conducting paramilitary operations against the Congolese people in order to protect its assets.

Anvil's despicable actions did not seem to bother Katumbi, who continued working with them.

In fact, Katumbi later obtained three more mines in the northeast province of Lubumbashi, the capital of Katanga: Kinsevere, Tshifufia and Nambulwa.



Between November 2005 and March 2007, MCK—that is, Katumbi—sold 95 percent of these rights to Anvil, netting a whopping \$61.3 million. Shortly thereafter, Katumbi became governor of Katanga.

But that's not all. On November 13, 2006, Katumbi created an offshore company named GKMIC SA in Panama, a notorious tax shelter. It is headquartered at 8 Mahenge Avenue, in Lubumbashi—the same address where Katumbi's trucking business, Hakuna Matata, is based. Coincidence?

But Katumbi didn't want anyone to know what he was really up to. So he used the name "Moses Katumbi D'Agnano," an alternate identity that he has utilized before, to create GKMIC. His proper title? Managing Director. The address? Mahenge Avenue, Lubumbashi City, DRC.

According to the register of Panamanian companies, GKMIC is still alive and well.

It's worth noting that the other two directors of GKMIC—Ultra Mega Development SA and Fairfax Invest Corp. SA—are based in the British Virgin Islands, another tax haven. In 2010, the companies were linked to a Colombian businessman who was arrested in Panama two years earlier and deported to New York for money laundering of drugs. (The businessman plead guilty).

One can only speculate on why Katumbi created this offshore account. Was it to hide the \$61 million dollars from the Anvil sale, and from his constituents in the Congo? It seems likely. And that is not the sort of person fit to lead.

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Moise Katumbi, the Devil the Democratic Republic of Congo Doesn't Want

By Brian Smith

Kleptocracy is a problem that plagues developing nations (in fairness, the first world is not immune either). Governments' interests are supposed to lie in the betterment of their people, not its leaders. When officials place their individual gain over the collective good, fraudulent priorities and illicit behavior drive government's action. This results in poor services for a nation's citizens. Scarce dollars available for infrastructure projects such as sewage and irrigation systems, roads maintenance, school construction and other public works are delayed or diverted to line leaders' own pockets.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the self-exiled kleptocrat and presidential aspirant Moisé Katumbi knows this all too well. As the Governor the mineral-rich Katanga Province, Katumbi gained great material wealth while he engaged in corrupt schemes to avoid taxes, export duties that would help develop the country he pretends to love. But in Katumbi's mind,

DRC has always been for sale. More than 40 years ago, the bloody Congolese dictator Mobutu Sese Seko hand-picked the Katumbi family to be part of the ruling class. In his quest to maintain power, Mobutu worked to control strategic assets and industries—and the Katumbi family was in the fisheries and shipping business. After all, food and logistics are both very important everywhere, but more so in the developing world. From there, Moisé Katumbi spent years being educated around the world—learning



about \$5,000 suits and private jets. Rather than live the life of a patriot and invest in civil society, Moïse Katumbi has chosen the path of self-enrichment at every opportunity. It's no wonder Katumbi believes the DRC is for sale.

Profiting off of government connections runs in the Katumbi family. Raphael Soriano, Moïse Katumbi's brother, was hired by the government of Zambia to represent the country during a \$100 million arms and equipment contract negotiation. Soriano was given wide discretion by the Zambian government to secure the deal, and arranged a lucrative fee for himself as the middleman. Funds were deposited into a foreign bank account that belonged to Katumbi's wife, Betti. After payment was made but goods failed to be delivered, Zambian officials realized \$20 million was siphoned off by Soriano. Zambia's Attorney General sued Katumbi's wife and his half-brother for restitution, accusing them of laundering the \$20 million in a phony arms deal.

Despite having scammed Zambia already, Soriano and Katumbi were recently involved in another corrupt arms deal with Zambia. Despite its precarious fiscal condition, Zambian President Edgar Lungu put off urgent government projects to quickly find the money for the deal.

Soriano also stands to gain billions from a lucrative deal with the Angolan government which just awarded him a budget of \$60 billion to build nearly 600,000 homes.

Last year Katumbi was fined \$6 million by a Congolese court for profiting off of a questionable real estate deal. As Katumbi angles to return to the Congo and run for president, perhaps his promise of higher wages and economic opportunity is for himself and his family, not the Congolese people.

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Moise Katumbi: Politics & Profit Over the Congolese People

By Brian Smith

Before resigning from the People's Party for Reconstruction and Democracy (PPRD) on September 29, 2015, Moise Katumbi, the former Governor of Katanga and a longtime member of the PPRD, was a loyal supporter of President Kabil. He supported him in the 2006 presidential election and again in 2011. He was known as Kabil's right hand man and confidante.



So, what changed? How was it that in January 2016—a mere eleven months before elections were to take place—Katumbi announced that he was now a member of the opposition party, Citizen Front 2016? In his public address, he even went so far as to say that the purpose of Citizen Front was first to "insist on the provincial elections of 2016 and the 2016 presidential elections by respecting the [set] constitutional deadlines and have the electoral calendar [implemented], as soon as possible."

He also hired a top US law firm, Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP, to lobby for US support for timely elections.

This is an excellent sound byte, but it is just that: Words to appease that he does not really believe. Indeed, as *Bernard Katompa, President of the Génération Déterminée Movement*, notes, if Katumbi is so pro-democracy, why was he such a latecomer calling for national elections? Perhaps the cause is more personal than noble. It seems unlikely that Katumbi suddenly had a change of heart. Katumbi has always done what is best for Katumbi.

According to a March 2007 WikiLeaks report, Katumbi has made several remarks indicating conflicts of interest.

A case in point: He repeatedly praised Nikanor, a London AIM-listed copper/cobalt mining company in the DRC. A few days later, a \$30-million-dollar construction deal was reported between Nikanor and Mining Company Katanga, the company Katumbi co-founded. Katumbi said he stepped down from MCK once he became governor of Katanga. He put his wife, Carine, in charge.

Until 2001, Katumbi was very close with then-Zambian president Frederick Chiluba—so close that Katumbi ran businesses out of the country. Let's be clear: The men are not just friends, they are brothers-in-law through marriage (their wives are sisters).

Levy Mwanawasa, Chiluba's successor, claimed that Katumbi and his brother, Raphael Soriano (aka Katebe Katoto), had embezzled state funds. Mwanawasa accused Katumbi of stealing seven million dollars for undelivered supplies out of Zambia, and froze Katumbi's assets. He accused him of "plundering national resources" along with Chiluba. This was an accurate accusation: During Chiluba's reign, the Zambian government lost more than twenty million dollars on an arms deal that Katumbi and Soriano failed to deliver.

Mwanawasa also put Katumbi on a 'wanted' list; warrants were issued for his arrest, and his property was confiscated.

Rather than face the music, Katumbi fled the country.

After Mwanawasa's death in August, 2008, his successor, Rupiah Banda, dropped the charges against Katumbi. He also returned some of Katumbi's property, along with a trunk full of emeralds worth more than \$214,000 dollars.

There was good reason to do so. According to a February, 2015 report, Rupiah Banda, his son Henry, current Zambian president Edgar Lungu and Katumbi negotiated a multi-million dollar arms deal to supply the various military units in Zambia as middlemen. Henry Banda had started negotiations as early as 2010, and they were slated to conclude in 2011, when Banda expected to be re-elected. Part of the proceeds were to go towards Lungu's 2016 campaign.

But Michael Sata won instead, and canceled the deal. Sata and Katumbi, needless to say, did not get along.

With Lungu in office, the deal was back on. Katumbi and Henry Banda bought military equipment for the Zambia Army, Zambia Air Force, Zambia National Service, and Zambia Police.

What could be the reason for Katumbi and Lungu's close relationship? The only explanation that Katumbi and Lungu, who has been compared to Zimbabwe despot Robert Mugabe, are trying to plunge DRC into chaos and destabilize the Congo. That way, Katumbi will have more power, and more wealth, for himself, which is exactly how he likes it.

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The Many Mysteries of Ask LLC and Moise Katumbi

By Brian Smith

As Moise Katumbi continues his public relations campaign across America in an attempt to undermine orderly elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, an intriguing mystery has emerged: who is behind the shadowy Delaware company, Ask LLC, that is spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to help Katumbi lobby American legislators and media?

Katumbi is a former Governor in the Eastern DRC state of Katanga who fled the country rather than face charges of selling a house he did not own. He was convicted in absentia, and sentenced to 3 years in jail. Rather than appeal, he ran to Europe, a base from which he has agitated the Congolese people towards civil unrest in an effort to return. His years as governor of Congo's mineral rich state left him



spectacularly wealthy. He was aided by his brother, Raphael Soriano, a reputed arms dealer who, according to British court documents, was caught up with Katumbi's wife Carine in a scheme to defraud the nation of Zambia of more than \$20 million.

But most interesting of all may be Ask, LLC, controlled by Delta Airlines pilot Daniel Piraino. Ask has registered with the US State Department as a foreign agent representing Katumbi, and, according to State Department records, has spent at least \$180,000 hiring white shoe law firm Akin Gump to lobby legislators on Katumbi's behalf. What does this mysterious business have to gain?

According to its own website, one of Ask's companies, Amaizing Grains, LLC was granted the rights by Katanga Province to develop a 160,000 acre farm... where Moise Katumbi formerly ruled as governor. There is no indication what amount, if any ASK is paying for access to this huge piece of arable land. There is no indication if any progress has been made, or who is investing money in it.

But the ties between Piriano's ASK LLC and Moise Katumbi may run deeper than that. To date, no reporter has asked Moise Katumbi to clarify his relationship with ASK, LLC, Daniel Piriano, and ASK's various businesses, which also includes a so-called heavy freight business shipping machinery weekly to, you guessed it, the capital of Katanga province, Lubumbashi. And the owner of this company, the Delta airline pilot, is spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to lobby elected officials for Moise Katumbi here in the United States, at his own expense.

More intriguingly, one of Daniel Piriano's other businesses entered into a trust agreement to manage a private jet owned by Katumbi's wife Carine, who was part of Raphael Soriano's arms running fraud in Zambia. This agreement allowed the \$8 million plane to be reregistered in the United States as N2SA, and seek insurance coverage here. Piriano obtained this insurance, and subsequently the jet crashed on February 12, 2012, killing a prior governor of Katanga (the same state where Katumbi was governor), Augustin Ktumba Mwanke. Ktumba was a very close ally of DRC President Joseph Kabilo.

The insurer sued Piriano's (Lima Delta) and Katumbi's (Socikat) companies for fraudulent misrepresentation, and won, rescinding the insurance policy. Which is bad enough, but the larger questions remain unanswered.

How does Delta Airline pilot Piriano come to control several very valuable companies, including one developing a massive piece of land in the DRC, while continuing to fly planes for an airline? Why is Piriano bankrolling an expensive lobbying campaign for Moise Katumbi, a fugitive from justice in his home country? How did Piriano come to control the management of a jet owned by a company controlled by the Katumbi family that killed one of the closest aides of Katumbi's obstacle to power, President Joseph Kabilo?

When will Moise Katumbi stop lying about his motivations for creating unrest in the Democratic Republic of Congo? Isn't it time for the truth?

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The Questionable Millions of Moise Katumbi's Brother

By Brian Smith

Moise Katumbi presents himself as a man of the people, who understands what life is like for the average Congolese laborer. Yet, in reality, Katumbi is a very rich man, who has used his wealth to bankroll his political career, and used his political career to enrich his lifestyle and his bank account. But Katumbi didn't get his millions of dollars on his own. His brother, Katebe Katoto (also known as Raphael Soriano), is his business partner and has been the family's primary benefactor for decades.

The source of Soriano's significant fortune came from the mining business, a lucrative industry in the Congo. He was given a contract to provide nearly all of the supplies for the thousands of laborers who work at the Gecamines mine operation, the largest mining site in the country. By delivering provisions, such as fish and other food, he wielded enormous influence over mine workers' productivity. Through

questionable relationships with Congo's much-maligned former leader, Mobutu Sese Seko, Soriano grew wealthy by plundering the nation's resources -- not an uncommon occurrence during much of Mobutu's reign. Mining continued to be a successful family business -- when Moise Katumbi was elected governor of the mineral-rich Katanga province, he reportedly divested of his significant interests in mining and put them in his wife's name.



Profiting off of government connections was another lucrative business for Raphael Soriano. He was hired by the government of Zambia to represent the country during a \$100 million arms and equipment contract negotiation. Soriano was given wide discretion by the Zambian government to secure the deal, and arranged a lucrative fee for himself as the middleman. Funds were deposited into a foreign bank account that belonged to Moise Katumbi's wife, Betti. After payment was made but goods failed to be delivered, Zambian officials realized \$20 million was siphoned off by Soriano. Zambia's Attorney General sued Katumbi's wife and his half-brother for restitution, accusing them of laundering the \$20 million in a phony arms deal.

Despite having scammed Zambia already, Soriano and Katumbi were recently involved in another corrupt arms deal with Zambia. Despite its precarious fiscal condition, Zambian President Edgar Lungu put off urgent government projects such as roads, and hospitals to quickly find the money for the deal.

Raphael Soriano is considered to be the mentor of his younger brother, to whom he has also ceded the reins of the highly profitable football club "Almighty Mazembe". As president of the team, Katumbi created the "one hundred percent" which consists of young men that owed obedience, loyalty, sacrifice, and devotion to him. It seems the Katumbi family prefers things that way.

Soriano also stands to gain billions from a lucrative deal with the Angolan government which just awarded him a budget of \$60 billion to build nearly 600,000 homes.

Just last year, Katumbi was fined \$6 million by the Congolese court and charged for hiring mercenaries. As Katumbi angles to return to the Congo and run for president, promising higher wages and economic opportunity, his brother will undoubtedly be looking for business opportunities along the way.

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UN Human Rights Council and George Soros: Dictating American Foreign Policy

By Brian Smith

The failed Obama era policies that destabilized whole regions and created great violence are alive today, backed by currency manipulator George Soros, and delivered by the United Nations falsely named Human Rights Council. Working in concert, these corrupt organizations are developing and promoting false narratives in a poorly hidden attempt to dictate foreign policy to the Trump administration. Most recently, this has involved conducting a secretive effort to undermine the administration by putting their foot in the door at the US State Department, using Obama era holdovers to do their bidding.

It's instructive to observe that then President George Bush refused to join the council on its creation in 2006, and that President Obama later reversed his decision and became a member. The council is led by High Commissioner



Congolese Fugitive Moise Katumbi, George Soros, and UN Human Rights Council Commissioner Zeid Ra'ad Hussein, working together to undermine the Trump Administration.

Jordanian Zeid Ra'ad Hussein, who calls himself the "global voice on human rights, universal rights; elected by all governments," yet takes every opportunity to trash President Trump – on American soil – likening the president and his campaign to ISIS, while remaining resolutely silent on abuses in North Korea and elsewhere. In March, Zeid attacked Trump for running a policy based on "discrimination, anti-Semitism and anti-minority violence."

The Trump administration has expressed its disdain towards Zeid's council on more than one occasion. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson in March said the United States would not continue participating in the council unless it undergoes "considerable reform." That same month, Nikki Haley told the Council on Foreign Relations: "The

Human Rights Council is so corrupt ... I think that we need to look at it," and "When the council passes more than 70 resolutions against Israel, a country with a strong human rights record, and just seven resolutions against Iran, a country with an abysmal human rights record, you know something is seriously wrong."

Indeed, where Zeid does speak out, his Human Rights Council serves the agenda of George Soros, who uses instability and violence to create currency instabilities that he and his foundations use for their own profit. Such a gambit is currently taking place in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where Zeid supports propagandistic reports created by Soros backed "Human Rights Watch," to undermine the legitimacy of the DRC Government from the prestige of his position. He uniformly lays blame for tribal conflicts and pan-African security challenges at the feet of the existing government in an effort to do the bidding of Soros, who always seems to find a way to profit from instability in resource rich regions of the world, while attempting to remake the planet in his own progressive image.

After Zeid makes his statements, a ring of Soros backed NGOs and foundations go to work on behalf of opposition figures in the DRC, like fugitive from justice Moise Katumbi, who became one of the richest leaders in Congo from his governorship of the mineral laden Katanga province there, before corruption led to his conviction on criminal charges in the DRC. Rather than defend himself, Katumbi fled, and now calls for violence and a coup in the DRC which would, not coincidentally, install Katumbi as the new leader. Interestingly, Katumbi is a modern darling of progressive politics despite (or because of) this, and is seen with white shoe lobbyists in the halls of the US State Department, making his case to Obama era holdovers at the State Department, still prosecuting a failed Obama era doctrine of social intervention (like the falsely named Arab Spring) that have led to the growth of terrorist organizations and civilian misery everywhere it has been tried. In fact, these State Department holdovers have made an attempt to limit the ability of the DRC government to communicate to the US Government, in an effort to undermine its position in the US and support Zeid and Katumbi's progressive vision. As the Trump Administration struggles with lawmakers to put their own team in place throughout government, these holdovers attempt to undermine the President's agenda with the tacit assistance of groups like Zeid's U.N. Human Rights Council and the Soros organizations.

US Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley is scheduled to make a trip to the Democratic Republic of the Congo soon. Conservative Americans hope she recognizes the complicit actions of the UN Human Rights Council, Moise Katumbi, and George Soros for what they are, and calls for order, peace and stability in a region of the world little

understood or followed by outsiders, but of great strategic importance to the U.S. Indeed, In his refreshing speech before the UN General Assembly in September, Donald Trump articulated a new American policy of "principled realism," a break from previous administrations propping up corrupt, morally bankrupt regimes. President Trump called out hypocrisy at the UN, where the US is footing nearly 25% of the bill, and particularly in the Human Rights Council.

The Trump Administration rightly pulled out of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) because it failed to live up to its mission and promulgated intense anti-Israeli bias. Maybe the US in continuing President Trump's 'principled realism' – should withdraw from the Human Rights Council until its High Commissioner ends his flirtation with George Soros once and for all. And hopefully Ambassador Haley will recognize this conspiracy of progressive interests for what they are... another attempt to profit and enforce a political orthodoxy of progressivism from a destabilized and violent world.

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What Does It Take to Buy a Country? Moise Katumbi and His Plan for the DRC

By Brian Smith

The United States should not engage in regime change abroad. The path leads to unknown and often unfortunate ends. While the United States has a checkered past as the world's policeman, attempted regime change is always a blemish. In 2015, Obama administration campaigners including National Field Director Jeremy Bird and top adviser David Axelrod worked on President Obama's behalf to tear down



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu through the "Anyone but Bibi" campaign. And today, former Obama National Security Advisor James Jordan is in cahoots with the Democratic Republic of Congo's oppressive, corrupt and self-exiled opposition candidate Moïse Katumbi. Why would American interests work with opposition candidates if the goal wasn't regime change? And, what does American not know about the path forward that will make this attempt at regime change toxic like all those that came before? Meddling in foreign elections for personal or national gain rather than working with existing governments to grow democracy and democratic institutions is simply un-American. It represents the worst of American imperialism, not the shining city on the hill.

Better relations with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is a good idea. DRC could be an important ally in sub-Saharan Africa against the spread of Chinese influence in the developing world. Today, China is in a race against the world to control—through soft

power like foreign aid and shows of force like military expansion and island building—natural resources, water, rare earth minerals, land and economic interests. The DRC is the key to sub-Saharan African development. Replete with natural resources, DRC has abundant supplies of copper (wiring), gold (circuit boards), diamonds (countless industrial applications), uranium (energy), and oil. DRC is also home to Inga Falls—the largest waterfall by flow rate (ability to generate sustainable, clean energy for the continent) in the world. By all regards, DRC should be one of the richest nations on the planet.

The self-exiled kleptocrat Moïse Katumbi knows this all too well. As the Governor the mineral-rich Katanga Province, Katumbi gained great material wealth while he engaged in corrupt schemes to avoid taxes, export duties that would help develop the country he pretends to love. But in Katumbi's mind, DRC has always been for sale. More than 40 years ago, the bloody Congolese dictator Mobutu Sese Seko hand-picked the Katumbi family to be part of the ruling class. In his quest to maintain power, Mobutu worked like the Chinese of today—he worked to control strategic assets and industries—and the Katumbi family was in the fisheries and shipping business. After all, food and logistics are both very important everywhere, but more so in the developing world. From there, Moïse Katumbi spent years being educated around the world—learning about \$5,000 suits and private jets. He spent time learning from the infamous South African arms dealers David Tokoph and was later embroiled in a money laundering scheme with Zambian arms dealers. Rather than live the life of a patriot and invest in civil society, Moïse Katumbi has chosen the path of self-enrichment at every opportunity. It's no wonder Katumbi believes the DRC is for sale.

But, what does it take to buy a country? Billions? Trillions in foreign aid? International altruism and largesse? No. Today, all it takes is \$30,000 a month paid to a high-power Washington lobbying firm by a Delaware shell company that also somehow employs the son of the self-exiled Katumbi. For \$30,000 a month, any would-be dictator can hire a former National Security Advisor to open doors, set meetings and convince Washington's opinion elite that regime change rather than diplomacy is the path best travelled. For \$30,000 a month, Americans will turn the other way and pretend there is nothing wrong with a person who clearly exhibits a pattern of graft and corruption.

Africa is a challenging continent. Each country has a dark and sad history of Western imperialism and oppression. American optimism for a better future cannot erase the reality of Africa's past. And, American decisionmakers would be wise to take another look before deciding that Moïse Katumbi is our friend or that he cares about anything but his bank account.

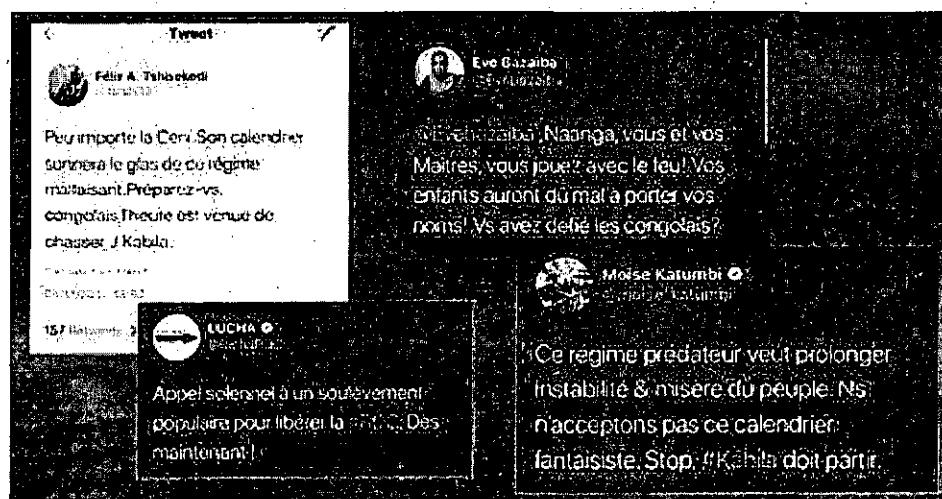
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Why is the US Congress Giving Aid and Comfort to Soros Backed Violent Dissidents in the Heart of Africa?

By David Greenwald

Less than two weeks ago, US Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley visited the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and saw both the challenges and the opportunities that this nation at the heart of Africa presents to the US. She met with the head of the independent election commission, CENI, and came to understand the many challenges that influence the country's ability to hold a free and fair election that is available to all citizens. Upon the release of the December 23, 2018 election date, Haley pledged to work closely with the DRC on this national ballot.

The DRC is Africa's second largest country, with limited infrastructure. Literacy rates are low, yet the next election will include tens of thousands of candidates. It's important to know that not only will a



president be elected, but also local elections for parliament and all the provinces. The ballot for these myriad candidates will be computerized, a difficult and time consuming process that will take months. The computer terminals must then be distributed across

the second largest country (in land area) in Africa, with a combined size greater than that of Spain, France, Germany, Sweden, and Norway, but with an extremely limited transportation network. It is a massive undertaking.

As experience in other African countries has illustrated, elections that are disorganized or untrustworthy bring chaos, violence, and death. Recent Kenyan elections, which were overseen by a host of international officials (including John Kerry) were discredited, and that led the Supreme Court of Kenya to invalidate the results and call a new ballot. And even that ballot was contested, which has resulted in numerous riot deaths. After months of unrest and uncertainty, Kenya still does not have a ratified new leader and violence is endemic.

The situation is much worse in the DRC, and Kenya's experience is the explosive possibility that Congolese leaders are working to avoid. Therefore, they turned over the election process to an independent commission with great expertise, experience, and international credibility. Nikki Haley recognized the work of this commission, and that the opposition calls for a ballot before the end of 2017 were simply impossible, inevitably leading to an election fiasco worse than Kenya's. Her belief that elections should be held before the end of 2018 remains the best opportunity that the Congolese people have for a smooth and stable transition, which can only result from a free and fair election open to all citizens.

Indeed, the Chairperson of the African Union, Moussa Faki Mahamat, has praised the work of the independent CENI commission in developing this comprehensive and attainable election timeline leading to the December 23, 2018 date. And the African Union through its member states has pledged logistical, technical, and financial support for this election.

The effort to delegitimize the current administration of the DRC by some opposition members violates the Congolese constitution, which clearly and simply states that the incumbent president will continue to serve until the newly elected president assumes office. This is not a surprise to some opposition leaders, who know it very well. Of course, the primary opposition in the DRC doesn't care; it simply wants power.

The primary opposition leader, Moise Katumbi, has already called for a coup through strikes and violence. In a recent tweet, he said (translated): "This predatory régime wants to prolong population misery and instability. We will not accept this fantasy calendar. Stop. Kabila has to go." In another tweet, opposition leader Felix Tshisekedi called for ignoring CENI through a coup (translated): "Never mind CENI, it's calendar will signal the end of this evil regime. Get ready Congolese, time has come to kick out Kabila." And opposition political party head Eve Bazaiba threatened the head of the CENI commission (translated): "(Commission head) Nangaa, you and your masters, are playing with fire!"

Your children will have difficulties carrying your names. You are defying the Congolese people." Could it be any clearer why free, fair and open elections are so important to the future of the Democratic Republic of the Congo?

This week, the House Foreign Affairs Committee will take up this matter with a one-sided hearing on November 9th. Alarmingly and in the face of so much evidence, this committee of the US Congress continues to push for an arbitrary election date, rather than a well-organized and fair election open to all. Panelists invited to speak at this hearing have made overt calls for violence and a coup. Several them receive funds from the Soros network, and act in concert with the Soros backed Commissionaire of the UN Human Rights Council, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein of Jordan, who has repeatedly proved his lack of credibility.

With regards to the matter of elections in the DRC, the position of the US Government has been set by Ambassador Haley, and it is that elections should be held before the end of 2018. Yet the panel for this hearing has been stacked with apologists for DRC's violent opposition, which renders it without value in spurring a real conversation about the US-DRC relationship. In a memo released Monday, the dissident LUCHA organization called for a people's uprising against the government, while its representative, Fred Bauma, is scheduled to speak at this hearing. His organization's statements are inconsistent with the stated goal of resolving the political crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This goal will not be accomplished by coup, violence, civil unrest, or other forms of mob rule to benefit a corrupt opposition.

Those who have taken the time to understand the complexities of the next national election in the DRC have become proponents of the independent CENI commission plan. The components of the political opposition which calls for revolution and violence to serve their own objectives, simply do not have the interests of either the Democratic Republic of the Congo or the United States at heart. It's time to join with Ambassador Haley and the African Union in recognizing that a free fair and open election is the only path forward for a stronger US-DRC partnership and the best benefit of the Congolese people.